

March 15, 2005

**TO:**

Barry Drucker  
Minerals Management Service  
381 Elden St.  
Herndon, VA 20170-4817

**FROM:**

H. Ward Slacum Jr.  
Versar, Inc.  
9200 Rumsey Road  
Columbia, MD 21045

**SUBJECT:** Progress report for Contract No. 1435-01-02-CT-85060 "Environmental Investigation of the Use of Shoals Offshore Delaware and Maryland by Mobile Benthos and Finfish Species"

Dear Dr. Drucker:

This is progress report number eight for our project entitled "Environmental Investigation of the Use of Shoals Offshore Delaware and Maryland by Mobile Benthos and Finfish Species". This report summarizes our accomplishments and ongoing tasks for this project. At this point all field work has been completed and the analyses are ongoing. This report covers the period from October 13, 2004 to March 1, 2005.

**1. Accomplishments:** The two year field sampling effort, including net sampling and bioacoustics was completed in September of 2004. We are currently conducting the statistical analysis. Status of the entire project broken down by relevant tasks is outlined below.

**Task 1. Development of Technical Field Program to Address Biological Questions Concerning the Relationship of/and Use of Offshore Shoal Areas by Finfish and Other Mobile Species.**

**A. Design Technical Field Program.** Task completed Fall 2002.

**B. Select Appropriate Reference Locations.** Task completed Fall 2002.

**C. Implement Field Program.** The net and bioacoustics surveys were initiated in the Fall of 2002 and the field portion of this task was completed in the summer of 2004.

**D. Geological Assessment of Shoal Integrity Using Existing Data.** Dr. Doug Levin has been contracted to do the assessment. A Draft final report is expected in April 2005.

**Task 2. Identify Relevant Field Data from Local Agencies and Literature Review.** Task completed Fall 2002.

**Task 3. Manuscript Preparation.** All the field data from the net and bioacoustics survey have been entered electronically and data analysis is ongoing.

**Task 4 and 5. Technical and Non-Technical Draft and Final Summaries.** Expected after the manuscript is accepted by MMS.

**Task 6. Presentation of Findings at Scientific/Technical Conference.** In addition to our two previous presentations we have submitted an abstract to the 2005 Annual Estuarine Research Federation (ERF) scheduled for September 2005.

**Task 7. Preparation of Presentation Slide Sets.** All relevant photographs and presentation slides will be delivered with the final manuscript.

**Task 8. Data Management and Spatial Data File Submittal.** All field data has been entered in a relational data base and quality assurance is complete. Any spatial data files relevant to this project will be transferred along with the final manuscript.

We are moving forward with the fisheries net survey analysis with no significant results so far. We have received a draft final copy of the bioacoustics survey and are in the process of reviewing that. If you have any questions concerning this Progress Report, please contact me at 410-740-6046, or via e-mail at [wslacum@versar.com](mailto:wslacum@versar.com).

Sincerely,

H. Ward Slacum Jr.